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ABSTRACT

One of the largest brick forts built in the United States, Fort Pickens (along with nearby Fort McRee, Fort Barrancas, and Advanced Redoubt) provided the setting for a serious effort by a small group of men to avert or at least postpone the outbreak of the Civil War. Months before the firing on Fort Sumter, southern forces at nearby Pensacola (Florida) worked to find a way of seceding from the Union without initiating bloodshed. This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration files "Fort Pickens" and "Fort Barrancas Historic District" and on historic structure reports for both forts. The lesson can be used to teach units on the Civil War. It begins with an overview of the events and contains the following sections: "About This Lesson"; "Getting Started: Inquiry Question"; "Setting the Stage: Historical Context"; "Locating the Site: Maps (1861 Map of Harbor Defenses for Pensacola)"; "Determining the Facts: Readings (Civil War in the Pensacola Area; Major versus Lieutenant Slemmer; Key People and Critical Decisions)"; "Visual Evidence: Images (Aerial View of Fort Pickens; Diagram of Fort Pickens; Aerial View of Fort Barrancas; Diagram of Fort Barrancas)"; "Putting It All Together: Activities (Surrender or Not; Researching Pensacola in the Civil War; Isn't It Ironic?; Military Installations in the Local Community)"; and "Supplementary Resources." (BT)

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Teaching with Historic Places

Fort Pickens and the Outbreak of the Civil War

Teaching with Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
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SO 032 715

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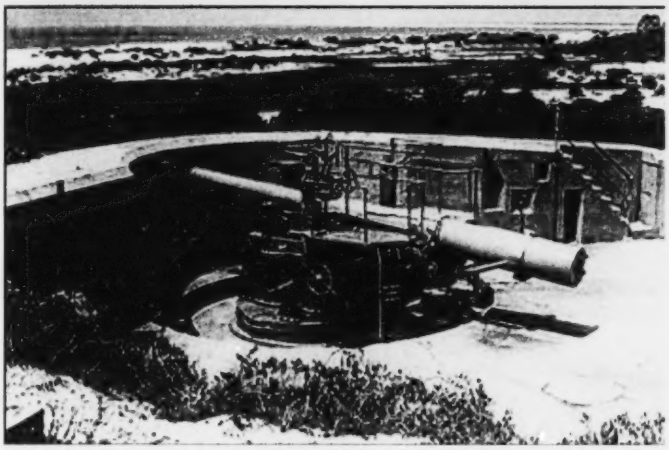
Fort Pickens and the Outbreak of the Civil War

The peaceful surroundings--white sugar-sand beaches, clumps of golden sea oats, and the soothing sounds of coastal waves pounding on the shores of a long barrier island--belie the serious purpose of Fort Pickens, located on Santa Rosa Island in Florida. One of the largest brick forts built in the United States, Fort Pickens provided the setting for a serious effort by a small group of men to avert or at least postpone the outbreak of the Civil War. Months before the firing on Fort Sumter, the Southern forces at nearby Pensacola, Florida, worked to find a way of seceding from the Union without initiating bloodshed.

Fort Pickens and nearby Fort McRee, Fort Barrancas, and Advanced Redoubt today lie within Gulf Islands National Seashore. They provide an intriguing setting for the important events that occurred in the Pensacola area just prior to and during the Civil War.



(Gulf Islands National Seashore)

This lesson is based on Fort Pickens, one of the thousands of properties and districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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About This Lesson

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration files "Fort Pickens" and "Fort Barrancas Historic District," and on historic structure reports for both forts. It was written by Ann Marie Folker, a Park Ranger at Gulf Islands National Seashore. The lesson was edited by Fay Metcalf and the Teaching with Historic Places staff.

Where it fits into the curriculum

Topics: This lesson could be used in teaching units on the Civil War in U.S. history.

Time period: 1820s-1860s

Objectives for students

1) To describe events in the region of Pensacola, Florida, that preceded the Civil War.

2) To examine the role of Fort Pickens prior to and during the Civil War.

3) To evaluate decisions made by key individuals in Pensacola in 1861, and to describe the consequences of those decisions.

4) To investigate the impact of military installations in their own community.

Materials for students

The materials listed below either can be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

1) one map of harbor defenses for Pensacola, Florida, 1861;

2) three readings about the defense sites and important historical figures in the Pensacola area at the outbreak of the Civil War;

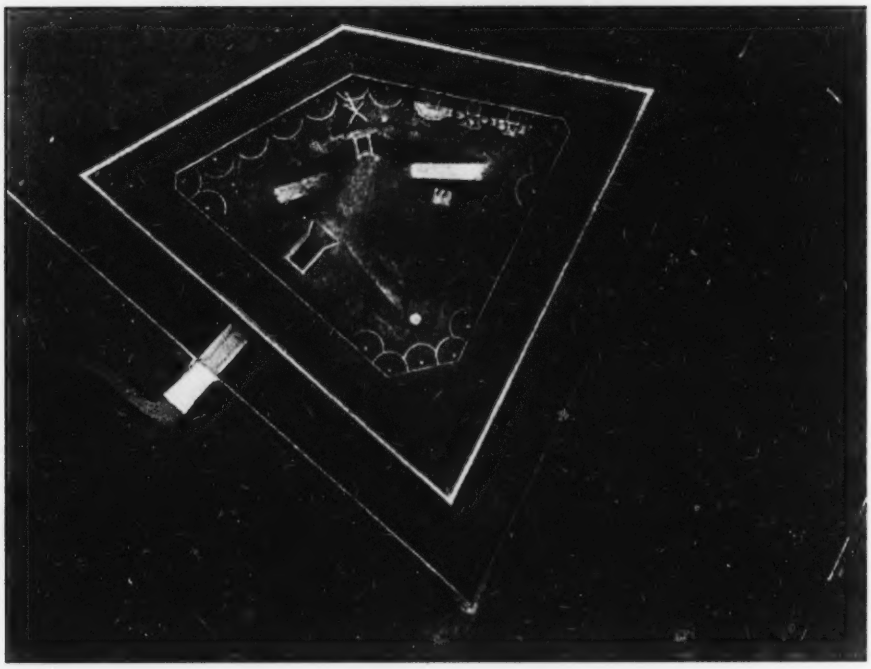
3) one photo and one diagram of Fort Pickens and its design;

4) one photo and one diagram of Fort Barrancas and its design.

Visiting the site

Gulf Islands National Seashore, administered by the National Park Service, comprises several sites. Fort Pickens is located at the tip of Santa Rosa Island along Fort Pickens Road, west of Pensacola Beach, Florida. The park is open year-round, although operating hours vary seasonally. For additional information, write the Superintendent, Gulf Islands National Seashore, 1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561, or visit the park's Web site at http://www.nps.gov/guis/

Getting Started
Inquiry Question



When might this structure be?
What do you think it was used for?

How to Use the Inquiry Question

Begin each lesson by asking students to discuss possible answers to the inquiry question that accompanies the Getting Started image. To facilitate a whole class discussion, you may want to print the page and use it to make an overhead transparency. The purpose of the exercise is to engage students' interest in the lesson's topic by raising questions that can be answered as they complete the lesson.

Rather than serving merely as illustrations for the text, images are documents that play an integral role in helping students achieve the lesson's objectives.

To assist students in learning how to "read" visual materials, you may want to begin this section by having them complete the Photo Analysis Worksheet for one or more of the photos. The worksheet is appropriate for analyzing both historical and modern photographs and will help students develop a valuable skill.

Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1:

Examine the photograph for 10 seconds. How would you describe the photograph?

Step 2:
Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section individually. What details--such as people, objects, activities--do you notice?

Step 3:

What other information--such as time period, location, season, reason photo was taken--can you gather from the photo?

Step 4:

How would you revise your first description of the photo using the information noted in Steps 2 and 3?

Step 5:

What questions do you have about the photograph? How might you find answers to these questions?

Setting the Stage

Pensacola, Florida, is located on one of the best deep water harbors on the Gulf Coast. Large ships can pass through the entrance and enter the protected bay. The Spanish, French, English, and the Americans recognized that Pensacola Bay's entrance provided the key to the defense of Florida's panhandle. When Spain ceded Florida to the United States in 1819, the U.S. Navy selected Pensacola Bay as the site for a navy yard.

Beginning in 1829, Americans built four forts in the area--Pickens (1829-34), McRee (1835-39), Barrancas (1839-44), and the Advanced Redoubt (1845-56)--to defend Pensacola and its navy yard from possible attacks by foreign powers. The strategy was to build up defenses that appeared so formidable an enemy would be deterred from attacking. At Pensacola this buildup was successful as no foreign country ever did attack the forts. The American Civil War, however, made for a different story.

Locating the Site
Map 1: 1861 map of harbor defenses for Pensacola, Florida.

(National Park Service)

The channel entrance to Pensacola Bay on the west end of Santa Rosa Island was fortified since the east end is too shallow for larger ships to pass through. Fort Pickens was sited both to protect Santa Rosa Island and to prevent enemy ships from entering the bay and anchoring within range of the navy yard.

Questions for Map 1

1. On a map of the United States, find the panhandle of Florida and the far western location of Pensacola.

2. Examine the map and suggest reasons why the four forts and the navy yard were built in their specific locations (consider the role of existing military technology).

3. Draw circles about the size of a dime with each fort as the center of its circle. These circles represent the approximate area that could be

protected by the cannon that were emplaced at these forts in the 19th century. How could the forts have assisted each other in defending the bay entrance from an attacking ship?

4. Why might an invader choose a landward assault? Identify which of the installations might have been designed to protect the navy yard against a land attack.

Determining the Facts
Reading 1: The Civil War in the Pensacola Area

When Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860, fear swept through the South. Although Lincoln had never called for abolishing slavery altogether, stating only that it should not spread to the territories, few Southerners believed him. They were certain Lincoln did plan to free the slaves, and Southern radicals called for the South to secede from the Union. South Carolina announced its secession in December 1860, even before Lincoln took office. Within six weeks Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas voted to leave the Union. These states justified their secession on the basis of states' rights. That doctrine held that if the states had voluntarily joined the Union, they also could leave it whenever they chose.

Pensacola Bay with its safe harbor and adjoining navy yard complete with docking, supply, and shipbuilding facilities would be a valuable prize for either side if war broke out between the Union and the emerging Confederate States of America. The four brick forts which had been built with slave labor to protect the bay's entrance from possible foreign attack would be part of the prize: Fort Pickens on the western end of Santa Rosa Island, Fort McRee to the west across the ship channel, and Fort Barrancas and its Advanced Redoubt on the mainland.

Stationed at Fort Barrancas, U.S. Army Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer realized that if war proved inevitable and Southern forces attacked, his small force of 51 men could not possibly defend all four forts. On January 10, 1861, the same day Florida seceded from the Union, he concentrated all his troops in Fort Pickens, which he believed was the key to the defense of Pensacola's harbor. Two days later, Slemmer's men watched as Southern soldiers moved into the other forts across the channel, removing the U.S. flags. Then, on January 15, soldiers from Florida and Alabama demanded the surrender of Fort Pickens. Lieutenant Slemmer refused. On January 28, 1861, a truce was reached that stated that the South would not attack and Fort Pickens would not be reinforced.

By the time Lincoln took office in March, both Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, and Fort Pickens, needed supplies. In his inaugural address Lincoln had pledged to continue to occupy federal property in the seceded states. If he withdrew the garrisons at those forts it would mean he officially recognized the Confederacy and its right to occupy those posts; if, on the other hand, he supplied the forts, he risked war.

The Union did send ships filled with supplies and reinforcements from Fort Monroe, Virginia, to Fort Pickens, but under terms of the truce they dared not land. For 10 weeks, the Union's ships with blue coated soldiers aboard lay at anchor near Fort

Pickens, while inside the fort, fearful of a surprise assault on the island, Lieutenant Slemmer kept his command on full alert. The Confederates had in fact planned such a surprise attack, but bad weather delayed them until the 12th of April. Then, before they could get under way, they learned that South Carolina forces had opened fire on Fort Sumter. The civil war so many had feared for so long became a reality.

Soon more Union ships with supplies and troops arrived off Fort Pickens. By the summer of 1861, the fort was still firmly under Union control, and the Union navy blockaded Pensacola's harbor. Colonel Harvey Brown, now in command of Fort Pickens, and his thousand or more soldiers strengthened the island's defenses by building gun emplacements, mounting guns, drilling, and moving supplies from ships to the fort.

The Confederate forces under the command of Gen. Braxton Bragg, now several thousand strong, kept equally busy. Though they were fresh troops, they made up for their lack of training by their great enthusiasm. The Confederate lines stretched for four miles, from Fort McRee on the west, eastward to Fort Barrancas and the navy yard. It was at the navy yard that the first fighting took place between the two armies. On September 13, 1861, a force of 100 Union sailors and marines crossed the bay and set fire to the Confederate ship, Judah.

Before dawn, on October 9, more than 1,000 Confederates landed four miles east of Fort Pickens and advanced against the Union lines. Darkness provided surprise but some soldiers lost their way among the sand dunes and scrub vegetation. One Union camp was taken and burned, but the approaching dawn and fear of Union gunboat attacks on their transport boats led the Confederates to withdraw eastward toward their landing place. In the meantime, Union troops from Fort Pickens counterattacked and the battle became a running skirmish down the island. Finally, the Confederates reached their boats and rapidly crossed the bay to safety. Known as the Battle of Santa Rosa Island, this confrontation was one of the first significant land battles of the Civil War fought in Florida.

Colonel Brown termed the attack a "gross insult to the flag" and was determined to punish the Confederates through a massive display of Union firepower from both Fort Pickens and ships in the gulf. At 10 a.m. Saturday morning, November 22, 1861, an all-day bombardment began. The Confederates did not wait long to respond. The next day both sides continued their bombardments. During those two days, 5,000 Union and 1,000 Confederate projectiles were fired from the big guns. The noise staggered the imagination. So enormous were the reverberations from the firepower that thousands of dead fish floated to the surface of Pensacola Bay, and windows shattered seven miles away in the town of Pensacola. When the bombardment ended late on November 23, little had been gained or lost by either side. At Fort Pickens, one man had been killed by enemy fire and two guns had been disabled (one had burst from too much use). The Confederates did not suffer many casualties or loss of equipment either, despite the fierce bombardment. Fort McRee was heavily damaged, however.

The Union army obtained control of Pensacola's harbor in May 1862--not as a consequence of the battle, but through the Confederates' decision to abandon the harbor and remove more than 10,000 of their soldiers from the region beginning in February. The Union forces took control of the deserted navy yard and the nearby forts, and they held Pensacola for the remainder of the Civil War. All the forts defending Pensacola's harbor once again flew the U.S. flag, and their defenders saw limited fighting during the rest of the Civil War. Instead, the forts acted as an important base of operations for raids into Florida and Alabama and as a prison for military and political prisoners.

Questions for Reading 1

1. Why was Pensacola Bay considered an important prize in the Civil War?

2. Why did the Union forces believe it was vital to hold control of Fort Pickens?

3. How did the role of Fort Pickens during the war differ from its original purpose?

4. How were events in the Pensacola area just before the outbreak of the Civil War similar to those at Fort Sumter? How were they different? (Use a U.S. history textbook for background information on Ft. Sumter.)

5. How did the Union army finally gain full control of Pensacola Harbor?

Reading 1 is compiled from Edwin C. Bearss, "Historic Structure Report, Fort Pickens, Historical Data Section, 1821-1895, Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida-Mississippi," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983; Randy F. Nimnicht, "Fort Pickens" (Escambia County, Florida) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1971; and Anne Castellena-Dudley, "Fort Barrancas Historic District" (Escambia County, Florida) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1978.

Determining the Facts
Reading 2: Major Chase Versus Lieutenant Slemmer

A Profile of William Chase

From 1829 until his death in 1870, Maj. William Chase of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers put his energies into developing the town of Pensacola and planning for its defense. He boosted Pensacola's economy by creating industries such as brick kilns and dredging plants as the offshoots of military contracts. He supported the use of a Pensacola bank as a depository of federal building funds and also helped to create a new bank, of which he became a major stockholder. By the 1830s he was a landowner, a leading real estate promoter, and president of the board of directors of the Alabama, Florida & Georgia Railroad Company. As part of his military command, Chase also helped to plan and build U.S. defenses on the Gulf of Mexico, including the four Pensacola forts.

Business affairs briefly took Chase away from Pensacola in 1854, but in 1861 when the Southern states had decided to secede from the Union and civil war seemed imminent, he returned to Pensacola as commander of the Florida contingent of Southern troops. By using surprise, deception, and overwhelming superiority in force, Southern troops bloodlessly occupied the Pensacola navy yard and found Fort Barrancas, Fort McRee, and the Advanced Redoubt already abandoned by Lt. Adam Slemmer. Chase also hoped to take control of Fort Pickens because it controlled access to the harbor of Pensacola. The Union soldiers at Fort Pickens knew this as well as Chase did, however, and they refused to turn the key fort over to the Southerners. They knew that even though the Southerners might control the other forts, they could not use the bay as long as the Union held Fort Pickens. On January 15, 1861, Chase went to Fort Pickens in person to try to persuade Slemmer to surrender. When he was unsuccessful, Chase reported to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that in order to take Fort Pickens troops would have to scale the walls. That action would guarantee a loss of life and would bring on civil war. Chase left things as they were for the time being.

Compiled from Edwin C. Bearss, "Historic Structure Report, Fort Pickens, Historical Data Section, 1821-1895, Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida-Mississippi," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983.

Fort Pickens, January 15, 1861

Chase: I have come on business which may occupy some time, and, if you have no objection, we had better go inside to your quarters.

Slemmer: I have objection, and it could hardly be expected that I would take you into the fort.

Chase: As I built the fort and know all its weak and strong points, I would learn nothing new by going in, and had no such object in proposing it.

Slemmer: I understand that perfectly, but it would be improper for me to take you in; and, however well you have known the fort before, you do not know what it now contains, nor what I have done inside.

Chase: That is true and I will state my business here. It is a most distressing duty to me. I have come to ask of you young officers, officers of the same army in which I have spent the best and happiest years of my life, the surrender of this fort. I would not ask it if I did not believe it right and necessary to save bloodshed; and fearing that I might not be able to say it as I ought, and in order, also, that you may have it in proper form, I have put it in writing and will read it. *[Chase then takes the manuscript from his pocket and begins to read, but, after reading two or three lines, his voice shakes, and his eyes fill with tears. He stamps his foot and says]* I can't read it. Here Farrand, you read it. *[He hands the paper to Commander Ebenezer Farrand.]*

Farrand [takes the paper and remarks]: I do not have my glasses. *[He then passes the paper to Lieutenant Jeremiah H. Gilman.]*

Gilman *[who had chosen to stand by the Union, reading for Chase]*: I have full powers from the governor of Florida to take possession of the forts and navy yard in his harbor. I desire to perform this duty without the effusion of blood. You can contribute toward this desirable result, and in my judgment, without sacrifice of the honor of yourself or your gallant officers and men. Now, as commissioner on the part of the governor of the State of Florida, I request the surrender of Fort Pickens and the public property it contains into my hands, to be held subject to any agreement that may be entered into between the commissioners of the State of Florida and the federal government at Washington.... If the Union now broken should be reconstructed Fort Pickens and all the public property passes peacefully under federal authority. If a Southern Confederacy separates itself from the Union would it not be worse than folly to attempt the maintenance of Fort Pickens or any other fortified place within its limits?

Slemmer: Colonel, how many men have you?

Chase: Tonight I shall have between eight and nine hundred. Slemmer: Do you imagine you could take this fort with that number?

Chase: I certainly do. I could carry it by storm. I know every inch of this fort and its condition.

Slemmer: With your knowledge of the fort and of your troops, what proportion of them, do you imagine, would be killed in such an attack?

Chase *[shrugging his shoulders]:* If you have made the best possible preparation, as I suppose you have, and should defend it, as I presume you would, I might lose one-half my men.

Slemmer: At least, and I don't believe you are prepared to sacrifice that many men for such a purpose.

Chase: You must know very well that, with your small force, you are not expected to, and cannot, hold this fort. Florida cannot permit it, and the troops here are determined to have it; and if not surrendered peacefully, an attack and the inauguration of civil war cannot be prevented. If it is a question of numbers, and 800 is not enough, I can easily bring thousands more.

Slemmer: I will give this letter due consideration...I will give you my answer tomorrow morning.

[Pause, Confederates exit stage. Then Farrand returns--this time with his glasses on--stating he has received a letter (from Slemmer) addressed to Chase, which he reads:]

Farrand: Under the orders we now have from the War Department, we have decided...that it is our duty to hold our position until such a force is brought against us as to render it impossible to defend it, or until the political condition of the country is such as to induce us to surrender the public property in our keeping to such authorities as may be delegated legally to receive it. We deprecate as much as you or any individual can the present condition of affairs, or the shedding of the blood of our brethren. In regard to this matter, however, we must consider you the aggressors and if blood is shed that you are responsible therefore.

From Jeremiah H. Gilman, "With Slemmer in Pensacola Harbor," in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. 1, 1887, 30-31.

Questions for Reading 2

1. If you were Major Chase, would you have attacked the Union soldiers at Fort Pickens? Why would Chase have felt concern over the fate of Fort Pickens?

2. Why would Lieutenant Slemmer have felt obligated to protect the fort? List reasons why he should not have surrendered Fort Pickens.

3. Do you think that under different circumstances the men involved in this incident might have been friends?

4. When do you think loyalty to country supersedes personal loyalties?

Determining the Facts
Reading 3: Key People and Critical Decisions

Quotation 1

When once constructed, they [the forts] require but little expenditure for their support. In time of peace, they withdraw no valuable citizens from the useful occupations of life. Of themselves, they can never exert an influence dangerous to public liberty; but as a means of preserving peace, and as obstacles to an invader, their influence and power are immense.1

--Lieutenant Henry W. Halleck, U.S. Army, 1843

Quotation 2

I called on Commodore Armstrong (Union Commanding Officer of the Navy Yard).... He had received orders to cooperate with me. We decided that with our limited means of defense we could hold but one fort, and that should be Fort Pickens, as it commanded completely the harbor and the forts and also the Navy Yard.2

--Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer, U.S. Army, January 1861

Quotation 3

We [the seceding states] seek not to war upon or conquer you; and we know that you cannot conquer us. Imbrue [stain] your hands in our blood, and the rains of a century will not wash from your hands the stain, while coming generations will weep for your wickedness and folly.3

--Florida Senator Stephen R. Mallory, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, just prior to his resignation from the U.S. Congress, February 1861

Quotation 4

...the possession of the fort [Fort Pickens] is not worth one drop of blood to us....4

--Stephen R. Mallory, secretary of the Confederate navy, 1861

Questions for Reading 3

1. Quotation 1:

   a) In planning the nation's defenses, how would you decide whether to train thousands of soldiers (mass mobilization) for the threat of war or spend thousands of dollars (purchase defense) on the construction of immense forts that might never be needed?

   b) Only about 50 soldiers were stationed in the area of Fort Barrancas in January 1861. Why do you think there were so few men there?

2. Quotation 2:

   a) If you were Lieutenant Slemmer, how would you have located your soldiers and supplies among the forts in January 1861? Why?

   b) If you were Lieutenant Slemmer, would you have surrendered when faced with the Confederate's demand? Why or why not?

3. Quotations 3 and 4:

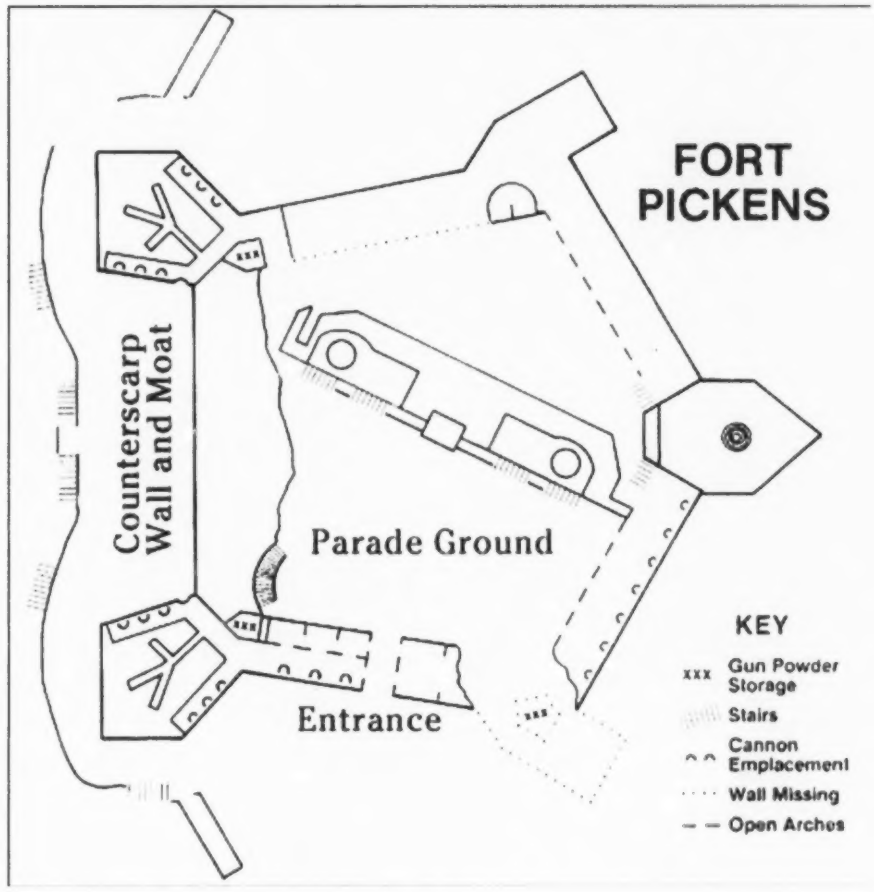
   a) Stephen R. Mallory, a former U.S. Senator and a Pensacola citizen, did all he could to bring about peaceful secession from the Union. He was instrumental in producing the "Truce of Fort Pickens" on January 28, 1861, which stated that the South would not attack and Fort Pickens would not be reinforced. List reasons why Mallory might have wanted to avoid bloodshed. Decide if you agree with either of his statements. Why or why not?

1 H. Wager Halleck, "Report on the Means of National Defence," printed in Senate Executive Document 85, 28th Cong., 2d. sess., 9.
2 War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 1880-1901), series 1, vol. 1, 335.
3 Stephen R. Mallory, Pensacola Home and Savings Association, date unknown, 5.
4 War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 1880-1901), series 1, vol. 1, 445.

Visual Evidence
Photo 1: Aerial View of Fort Pickens, c. 1970

(Gulf Islands National Seashore)

Diagram 1: Fort Pickens



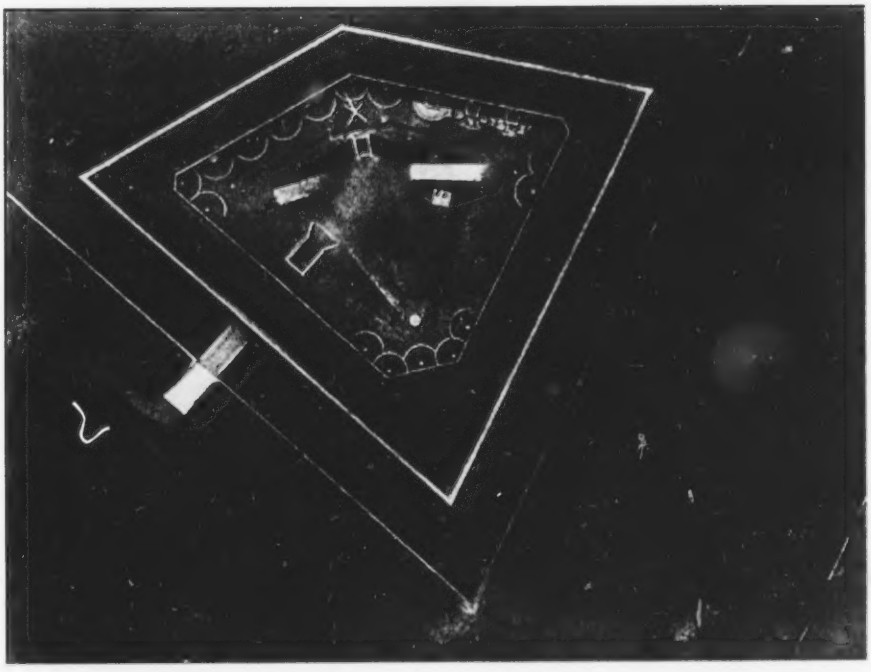
(Gulf Islands National Seashore)

Questions for Photo 1 & Diagram 1

1. Why do you think the corners of Fort Pickens projected outward?

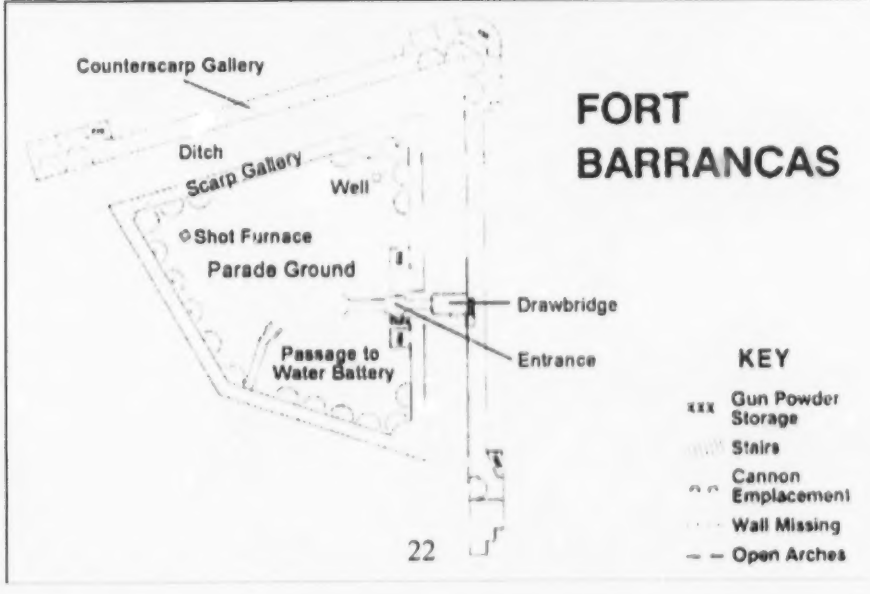
2. Using Map 1 as a reference, label Diagram 1 of Fort Pickens with the directions north, south, east and west as you believe the fort was sited. Why do you think the fort was positioned in the manner you chose?

Visual Evidence
Photo 2: Aerial View of Fort Barrancas, c 1983



(Gulf Islands National Seashore)

Diagram 2: Fort Barrancas



(Gulf Islands National Seashore)

Questions for Photo 2 & Diagram 2

1. Using Map 1 as a reference, label Diagram 2 of Fort Barrancas with the directions north, south, east and west as you believe the fort was sited. Why do you think the fort was positioned in the manner you chose?

2. Compare Photo 1 and Diagram 1 with Photo 2 and Diagram 2. What are some similarities and differences between the two forts? What are some factors that may account for the differences?

Putting It All Together

The following activities explore issues related to events in the Pensacola area at the outbreak of the Civil War and military installations in the local community.

Activity 1: Surrender or Not

Provide students with copies of Reading 2 and ask them to reread "A Profile of William Chase." After students read this selection, choose members of the class to represent Maj. William Chase and Cmdr. Ebenezer Farrand (Confederates), and Lieutenants Adam Slemmer and Jeremiah H. Gilman (Union). Have these students act out the confrontation that occurred at Fort Pickens on January 15, 1861. Remind students that Florida seceded from the Union on January 10, 1861, and would join the alliance that became the Confederate States of America. After the role play is completed, have the class discuss the relative merit of the positions presented.

Activity 2: Researching Pensacola in the Civil War

Divide the class into three groups and give each group one of the following questions to consider. (Some may require additional research.) After adequate preparation time, have the class listen as each group explains its question and defends its answers.

1. As a Pensacola citizen in 1861, realizing Pensacola's economy was based primarily on the federal government's presence in the area and that issues of concern included states' rights as well as slavery, would you have supported Florida's secession from the United States? Why or why not?

2. One of the principal issues of the Civil War was states' rights versus national rights. Does the phrase the "United States is" mean something different from the "United States are"? Based on events in the United States in the early 1860s and in the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, would you recommend states' rights over national rights or would you support the opposite perspective?

3. Find a reference to Fort Sumter in a history textbook or an encyclopedia. Now look up Fort Pickens. Why might Fort Pickens have been the site of the start of the Civil War just as easily as Fort Sumter?

Activity 3: Isn't It Ironic?

There were many ironies connected with activities in the Pensacola area in the 19th century. Use one or two of those listed below as examples and then ask students to list others. See how many ironies they can find. Then hold a general class discussion about inevitability or lack of inevitability in historic events.

1. The forts were built to protect the U.S. from the threat of foreign attack. The forts, however, saw action only during the Civil War when Americans fought among themselves.

2. William Chase supervised the construction of Fort Pickens (1829-1834). In 1861 he found himself asking for the fort's surrender. When the Union refused, he had to decide whether or not to attack the very fort he helped build.

3. Contracted slave labor built the Pensacola forts. In 1861 slaves who built Fort Pickens crossed the bay to tell the Union about the fort's weaknesses. Fort Pickens' only active use was during the Civil War, a war that set its slave builders free.

4. Fort McRee is now destroyed primarily due to the forces of nature, not man.

Activity 4: Military Installations in the Local Community

Ask students to research their own community (or region if necessary) to determine if there is a military base in the area. Have them answer the following questions: When was it established? Why was it established? Approximately how many military personnel are stationed at the base? What impact has the base had on the growth and development of the surrounding communities? How might these communities be affected if the military base was to close? Hold a classroom discussion based on the students' findings.

Fort Pickens and the Outbreak of the Civil War--Supplementary Resources

By looking at Fort Pickens and the Outbreak of the Civil War, students discover why Fort Pickens was so valuable to both the Union and Confederacy, and follow the actions of the military commanders faced with crucial decisions. Those interested in learning more will find that the Internet offers a variety of interesting materials.

Gulf Islands National Seashore http://www.nps.gov/guis/

Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas are part of Gulf Islands National Seashore, which is a unit of the National Park System. Visit the park's Web pages to learn more about the park and its history.

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources
http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/maritime/forts/forts.cfm

The Florida Maritime Heritage Trail offers histories, photographs, and maps of the many forts that protected the Florida shores, including Fort Pickens, Fort McRee, and Fort Barrancas. Also interesting, Florida in the Civil War is an on-line history exhibit that explores the role Florida played in the Civil War. http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/museum/civwar/index.html

Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/hhquery.html

The HABS/HAER collections document achievements in architecture, engineering, and design in the United States through a comprehensive range of building types and engineering technologies. Search the collection for documentation on numerous forts, including Fort Barrancas. Drawings and photographs, as well as historical data are provided.

Civil War Resources:

Crisis at Fort Sumter, Tulane University http://www.tulane.edu/~latner/

Crisis at Fort Sumter is an interactive historical simulation and decision making program. Using text, images, and sound, it reconstructs the dilemmas of policy formation and decision making in the period between Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860 and the battle of Fort Sumter in April 1861.

The American Battlefield Protection Program http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/civil.htm

The American Battlefield Protection Program, a division of the National Park Service, provides detailed on-line publications featuring different topics in the Civil War. Included is a battle summary of the Battle of Santa Rosa Island.

Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html
The National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System is a recently created database containing facts about Civil War servicemen, lists of Civil War regiments, and descriptions of significant Civil War battles. Also on this site is a descriptive history of African Americans in the Civil War.

National Archives and Records Administration http://search.nara.gov/
The National Archives and Records Administration offers a wealth of information about the Civil War. Use the search engine to access a special collection of photographs covering many aspects of the Civil War. Also search on "Civil War records" to locate comprehensive Union and Confederate records.

Library of Congress http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwphome.html
The Library of Congress created a selected Civil War photographic history in their "American Memory" collection. Included on the site is a photographic time line of the Civil War covering major events for each year of the war.

The United States Civil War Center http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/civlink.htm
Louisiana State University maintains a Civil War Center that locates, indexes, and makes available all appropriate private and public data on the internet regarding the Civil War. The site features over 4,500 links that promote the study of the Civil War from all perspectives.